



Summary of the

2006 Criminal Justice Summit

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The 2006 Criminal Justice Summit brought together a cross section of more than two hundred criminal justice professionals from each region (east, middle and west) of the state. As many disciplines as possible were represented at both the regional meetings as well as the wrap up session. Discussion and opinions from leaders within the various phases were sought.

Regional participants were charged with identifying strategies to bring about a shared vision for the future. The most common recommendations were:

- ❖ **Develop a statewide criminal justice consortium of key decision-makers;**
- ❖ **Increase the use of alternatives to incarceration and community-based programs;**
- ❖ **Reduce prison expansion;**
- ❖ **Prevent entry into the criminal justice system at earlier ages;**
- ❖ **Collect and share data on measurable outcomes; and**
- ❖ **Develop strategies for media and public education.**

Those making contributions to the success and final recommendations for the 2006 Summit included leaders within their respective areas which included sheriffs, judges, community services representatives, advocacy groups, volunteers, Department of Correction and Board of Probation and Parole as well as many other agencies that have an interest in the criminal justice system. The final session gave criminal justice leaders an opportunity to review the ideas and recommendations made at the regional level and determine the final recommendations and course of action the State and the criminal justice system as a whole should consider.

The format of the final session allowed open discussion relating to the problems and ideas from the regional meetings. Issues/problems were 'fine-tuned' and participants discussed the following specific problems and identified recommendations.

PROBLEM #1:

Fragmentation within the criminal justice system:

- Lack of collaboration at all levels, i.e., state, local and federal agencies, community efforts;
- No comprehensive and consistent approach;
- Conflicting goals and objectives between agencies and service providers; and
- No identifiable leadership on criminal justice issues.

GOAL #1:

Establish a statewide criminal justice coordinating council to improve the administration of justice through planning, research, evaluation and system-wide coordination of criminal justice activities.

- Develop effective communication links between all criminal justice agencies;
- Focus on planning, collaboration, education, evidence-based practices and implementation; and
- Develop and implement a statewide research methodology to identify and measure the results of initiatives.

PROBLEM #2:

Resources/Funding

- Resources and funding for community-based, institutional programs and aftercare need realignment; and
- Use of available funding sources, i.e., grants, need to be fully utilized.

GOAL #2:

Maximize criminal justice dollars to provide intervention or diversion programs for offenders.

- Utilize funds on programs that work, i.e., drug courts;
- Maximize current funds for programs;
- Expand community-based programs/treatment; and
- Realign resources and funding to support evidence-based programs.

PROBLEM #3:

Correctional programs are not developed according to evidence-based practices.

- Need to assess current practices with respect to evidence-based practice;
- Need to identify which offenders should be kept in the system and those that should be diverted; and
- Need to examine information-gathering system to eliminate duplication and determine the most important information needed to assess inmate's risks and needs to change behavior.

GOAL #3:

Implement Evidence-Based Practices in adult and juvenile prevention strategies

- Clarify primary goal(s) of corrections (punishment, reduced recidivism, other);
- Improve public safety by realigning resources;
- Implement an evidence-based risk and needs assessment at each point in the system;
- Mandate transfer of assessment and risk instrument prior to transfer to the Department of Correction;
- Analyze other options for offenders who do not pose a risk to public safety;
- Provide appropriate training for staff; and
- Develop an ongoing mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of programs.

PROBLEM #4:

The criminal justice system lacks a developed infrastructure and support system.

- Lack of effective communication and information sharing;
- No coordination of existing data systems utilized by different agencies; and
- Lack of clearly identified data needs.

GOAL #4:

Establish an integrated information system that links research with problems, links information systems, and integrates management information systems (state to local, local to local, state to state), as well as with the federal system.

- Make sure all information is readily available to parties who have a 'need to know';
- Develop a pilot effort with five or six metropolitan areas to test data sharing; and
- Pilot shared data system in key areas of the state which would be a "model" of integrated information systems, which would include a statewide review to determine how to proceed.
- The newly developed shared information system must support decision-making, minimize duplication, and considers HIPAA and other requirements.

PROBLEM #5:

Public perception is negative of the overall criminal justice system and there is a lack of awareness/education, lack of prevention, and lack of community involvement.

GOAL #5:

Inform, educate and solicit cooperation of the public.

- Collect information from 'stakeholders' and the general public to define problems and the benefits of involvement;
- Obtain more community involvement, solicit and empower civic organizations in assisting with the restoration of offender re-entry into the community;
- Develop a marketing plan/public service campaign with state leadership endorsement; and
- Challenge Tennesseans to get involved by developing a statewide resource, to encourage active involvement.

PROBLEM #6:

There are few organized prevention efforts to keep juveniles out of crime, due to limited funding and insufficient attention.

GOAL #6:

Focus on early intervention and prevention, which captures education, and other successful efforts as indicated by evidence-based practices.

- Secure state support/investment funding for evidence-based programs and deploy the resources;
- Develop programs to include children in custody;
- Define a juvenile primary prevention approach with targeted children being those of incarcerated parents and those in a high risk category and are already in the system;
- Develop a systemic family approach, i.e., enhance a family support safety net;
- Gain an understanding of the root causes of juvenile crime; and
- Reduce and stop the intergenerational cycle of crime.